

Message Text

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INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

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AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 TEL AVIV 8878

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TAGS: PFOR, PBOR, IS, XF

SUBJECT: ISRAELI UNCERTAINTIES ABOUT TERRITORY AND SECURITY

1. SUMMARY: A HIGH PROPORTION OF ISRAELIS -- PERHAPS A MAJORITY -- BELIEVE 1973 WAR PROVED THAT ISRAEL CANNOT AFFORD FOR SECURITY REASONS TO GIVE UP ANY OF TERRITORIES IT OCCUPIED IN 1967. ISRAELIS WHO HAVE NOT COME TO THIS CONCLUSION, AND WHO FEEL ISRAEL MUST TEST PROFESSED WILLINGNESS OF SOME ARABS, NOTABLY GOE, TO ESTABLISH PEACE IN RETURN FOR ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL, HAVE BEEN TRYING TO FIGURE OUT WHAT WITHDRAWAL ISRAEL CAN SAFELY UNDERTAKE. SOME BELIEVE THAT IF ARRANGEMENTS WERE CAREFULLY WORKED OUT FOR DEMILITARIZATION OF ENTIRE SINAI WHICH INCLUDED MILITARY MOVEMENT RESTRICTIONS AND MEANINGFUL INSPECTION, SINAI COULD BECOME SAFETY BUFFER PROVIDING SUFFICIENT EARLY WARNING FOR ISRAEL TO MAKE SUBSTANTIAL WITHDRAWAL POSSIBLE. REAL PROBLEM IS GOLAN HEIGHTS, FROM WHICH SYRIANS EARLY IN 1973 WAR ALMOST

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PENETRATED DEEP INTO ISRAEL. ISRAELIS CAN SEE SOME SAFETY FROM

LARGE DMZ EXTENDING INTO SYRIA PLUS IDF PRESENCE ON GOLAN HEIGHTS, BUT THEY REALIZE SYRIA COULD HARDLY BUY THIS. ALONG WITH THIS WORRY ARE APPREHENSIONS ABOUT CONTINUED US ARMS SUPPORT FOR ISRAEL AND POSSIBLE ARAB PROFIT FROM FUTURE SOVIET ADVANCES IN ARMS TECHNOLOGY. IN SHORT, ALL THESE QUESTIONS WOULD HAVE TO BE ANSWERED CONVINCINGLY BEFORE CONSENSUS COULD BE DEVELOPED IN ISRAEL WILLING TO CONTEMPLATE OFFER OF SUBSTANTIAL ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FOR SAKE OF PEACE. END SUMMARY.

2. WE FIND ON BASIS OF OUR CONVERSATIONS IN VARIOUS QUARTERS THAT MANY ISRAELIS HAVE CONCLUDED FROM 1973 WAR THAT ISRAEL FOR REASONS OF SECURITY CANNOT AFFORD TO GIVE UP ANY OF TERRITORIES OCCUPIED IN 1967 WAR. WHILE WE WOULD CAUTION THAT ISRAELI PUBLIC OPINION POLLS FOR VARIETY OF REASONS ARE LESS RELIABLE THAN THOSE IN US, PRESS REPORTS OF POLLS TAKEN RECENTLY IN ISRAEL ON TERRITORIAL ISSUE ACCORD WITH THIS ASSESSMENT. ONE POLL TAKEN BY HEBREW UNIVERSITY OVER OCT 16-19 PERIOD FOUND ANSWERS AS FOLLOWS TO QUESTION OF WHAT MAXIMUM TERRITORIAL CONCESSION ISRAEL SHOULD MAKE TO ACHIEVE PEACE AGREEMENT WITH ARAB STATES: ALL OF AREAS TAKEN IN 1967 - ONE PERCENT; NEARLY ALL - TWO PERCENT: A PART - 19 PERCENT: A SMALL PART - 27 PERCENT: AND NONE WHATSOEVER - 52 PERCENT. WE RECOGNIZE EXACT PERCENTAGES WILL FLUCTUATE DEPENDING ON CIRCUMSTANCES AT TIME GIVEN POLL IS TAKEN. FOREGOING, HOWEVER, IS ILLUSTRATIVE.

3. NEVERTHELESS, AS POLLS SUGGESTS, WE HAVE NOTED THAT THERE ALSO ARE SOME ISRAELIS WHO ARE TRYING TO PRESERVE OPEN MIND ON TERRITORIAL ISSUE BECAUSE THEY REALIZE IT IS CRITICAL FACTOR FOR ANY PEACE NEGOTIATIONS. SOME ISRAELIS BELIEVE THAT ISRAEL MUST NOW FIND OUT, DEFINITELY, WHETHER REAL PEACE BETWEEN ISRAEL AND NEIGHBORING STATES IS POSSIBLE UNDER ANY CONDITIONS AT ALL. THEY NOTE THAT ARAB LEADERS, PARTICULARLY SADAT, HAVE SOUGHT TO CREATE IMPRESSION THAT REAL PEACE IS POSSIBLE, PROVIDED ISRAEL AGREES TO WITHDRAWAL TO PRE-JUNE 1967 LINES. THEY ALSO NOTE, AS ALLON DID IN HIS TV INTERVIEW OCT 27 (TEL AVIV8714), THAT ARAB STATES HAVE NOW SHOWN CONVINCINGLY THAT THEY CANNOT AND WILL NOT LIVE WITH SITUATION WHERE ISRAEL CON-

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TININUES TO HOLD ALL OF TERRITORIES TAKEN IN JUNE 1967.

4. THESE ISRAELIS ARE THEREFORE EARNESTLY ASKING THEMSELVES WHETHER ISRAEL CAN AFFORD IN TERMS OF ITS SECURITY TO MOVE BACK FROM SUEZ CANAL AND FROM OUTER EDGE OF GOLAN HEIGHTS. THEY ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THESE LINES PROVED EXTREMELY IMPORTANT FOR ISRAEL'S SECURITY IN 1973 WAR BECAUSE OF SURPRISE NATURE OF ARAB ATTACK. THEY ARE TRYING TO EVALUATE FEATURES OF 1973

ARAB SURPRISE ATTACK TO SEE WHAT THIS MAY PORTEND FOR FUTURE. THEY NOTE THAT (A) EGYPTIAN AND SYRIAN GOVTS IN 1973, UNLIKE 1967, FORWENT AND SERIOUS PREPARATION OF DOMESTIC PUBLIC OPINION FOR WAR. (B) UNLIKE 1967, THESE COUNTRIES DID NOT NEED TO UNDERTAKE RAPID MOBILIZATION BECAUSE THEIR FORCES WERE ALREADY LARGELY MOBILIZED. (C) FURTHER, EGYPT AND SYRIA ACHIEVED REMARKABLE SYNCHRONIZATION OF WAR PLANS, AND (D) THEY DID SO WITHOUT ANY SUBSTANTIAL LEAKS. (E) FINALLY, AND MOST IMPORTANT, EGYPT AND SYRIA WERE ABLE TO MOVE FORCES UP TO LINE SUCCESSFULLY UNDER GUISE OF "DEFENSIVE REINFORCEMENT" BECAUSE THEY ALREADY HAD LARGE FORCES CONCENTRATED ON LINE FOR SEEMINGLY DEFENSIVE PURPOSES.

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5. ISRAELI ANALYSIS OF THESE ELEMENTS OF SURPRISE CONCLUDES THAT ISRAEL MUST ASSUME THAT ALL ELEMENTS BUT PERHAPS (E) CAN BE PRESENT IN ANY FUTURE WAR SITUATION. TO PROVIDE FOR THEM, IDF MUST BE BUILT AGAIN INTO SUPERIOR WAR MACHINE, WITH STILL GREATER MARGIN OVER COMBINED ARAB FORCES THAN ISRAEL HAD IN 1973 WAR. AS FOR (E), EVERYTHING WILL DEPEND,

SOME ISRAELIS FEEL, ON NATURE OF WHATEVER POST-1973 ARRANGEMENTS CAN BE WORKED OUT IN AREA, NOTABLY IN SPHERES OF POSSIBLE DMZS, ARMS LIMITATIONS, RESTRICTIONS ON MOVEMENTS OF FORCES, AND INSPECTION RIGHTS.

6. IN OTHER WORDS, SOME ISRAELIS BELIEVE THAT ALTHOUGH ISRAEL MUST HAVE SUBSTANTIAL TERRITORIAL BUFFER TO PROTECT IT AGAINST FUTURE ATTACK, ESPECIALLY ATTACK BY EGYPT AS MAIN ARAB POWER, THIS COULD CONCEIVABLY BE ACHIEVED BY CAREFULLY WORKED OUT DEMILITARIZATION ARRANGEMENTS RATHER THAN OUTRIGHT ANNEXATION BY ISRAEL OF AREA CONSTITUTING BUFFER. THIS BELIEF RELATES, OF COURSE, PRIMARILY TO SINAI.

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7. SITUATION IS MUCH MORE COMPLICATED IN CASE OF GOLAN HEIGHTS THAN IN CASE OF SINAI. QUESTIONS OF BUFFER IN THESE TWO PLACES ARE SEEN AS RELATED, SINCE IDF CAN HANDLE SYRIAN FIGHTING ALONE, AND IN CASE OF COORDINATED EGYPTIAN-SYRIAN ATTACK AGAINST ISRAEL, TRIPWIRE FOR ISRAEL OF DETECTING LARGE EGYPTIAN FORCE CROSSING CANAL INTO SINAI WOULD NORMALLY SERVE ALSO AS EARLY WARNING TO ISRAEL OF POSSIBLE IMPENDING SYRIAN ATTACK AS WELL. BUT THERE COULD BE ABNORMAL SITUATION WHERE EGYPTIAN-SYRIAN PLAN CALLED FOR SYRIAN FORCES TO ATTACK FIRST IN ORDER TO GAIN SURPRISE. IN THIS SITUATION, EVEN COMPLETE DEMILITARIZATION OF GOLAN HEIGHTS MIGHT NOT BE ENOUGH, CONSIDERING NARROWNESS OF HEIGHTS AREA AND BEARING IN MIND HOW TERRIFYINGLY CLOSE SYRIAN FORCES CAME ON OCT 7-9 TO PUSHING INTO (AND THROUGH) GALILEE.

8. TO ACHIEVE EARLY-WARNING SAFETY AGAINST A SURPRISE SYRIAN ATTACK WHICH WOULD BE FOLLOWED QUICKLY BY EGYPTIAN ATTACK, ISRAELIS SEE THAT THEY WOULD NEED DMZ EXTENDING DEEP INTO SYRIA BEYOND

GOLAN HEIGHTS AND THAT SYRIA COULD HARDLY BE INDUCED TO AGREE TO THIS IF ISRAELI FORCES AT SAME TIME WERE GOING TO REMAIN ON GOLAN HEIGHTS. FOR ISRAEL NOT TO HAVE FORCES ON GOLAN HEIGHTS, IN TURN, STRIKES EVEN THE MOST OPEN-MINDED ISRAELIS AS RISKY PROPOSITION FOR ISRAEL.

9. THIS IS AS FAR AS FLEXIBLE ISRAELIS HAVE BEEN ABLE TO GO IN THEIR CONTEMPLATION OF ISRAEL'S COMPLEX OF TERRITORIAL AND SECURITY PROBLEMS. THEY HAVE HIT UPON NO SOLUTIONS. NAGGING THEM ALSO ARE APPREHENSIONS ABOUT FIRMNESS OF CONTINUED US ARMS SUPPORT AND-- EVEN IF SUCH SUPPORT CAN BE COUNTED ON-- DANGER THAT SOVIET ARMS TECHNOLOGY MAY, AT MOMENT ARABS MIGHT AGAIN ATTACK, HAVE STOLEN TEMPORARY MARCH ON US ARMS TECHNOLOGY, DEPRIVING ISRAEL OF SOME OF ITS ESSENTIAL EDGE IN AIR POWER OR OF ITS TACTICAL SUPERIORITY ON GROUND, NOTABLY

IN USE OF ARMOR.

10. CONCLUSION: JUDGING FROM FOREGOING, ISRAELIS WILL NOT BE
CONVINCED THEY CAN AFFORD SUBSTANTIAL WITHDRAWAL FROM
EGYPTIAN AND SYRIAN TERRITORY UNLESS THEY ARE PRESENTED WITH
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SCENARIO WHICH THOROUGHLY ACCOUNTS FOR WORST-CASE FUTURE
SITUATION OF COORDINATED SURPRISE EGYPTIAN-SYRIAN
ATTACK, USING BEST SOVIET ARMS IN GENEROUS SUPPLY.
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